

Editor's Introduction

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This special issue on media governance presents five contributions that consider whether there is a power shift underway from top-down media regulation and policy, defined largely by (national) governments, toward more inclusive forms of media governance, against a backdrop of ever more complex media systems. This complexity is attributable to rapidly changing societal and technological contexts and to the trend toward mergers and acquisitions being favored, rather than limited, by national governments. Although national legislation is not the only way to protect the citizen and the public interest, there is considerable evidence suggesting that media policy and regulation have not been instrumental in upholding our conceptions of the public good in recent decades. As a result, arguably, there are strong grounds for fostering greater flexibility so as to encourage regulatory mechanisms aimed at preventing excessive industry control of the media and at ensuring the pluralism and diversity of converged media platforms. The concept of media governance, although difficult to define, generally is understood to involve an expanding number of social, political, and economic actors.

In this special issue, the contributors seek to deepen our understanding of media governance, as an elusive concept that has, nevertheless, gained in importance in recent years. Used to depict changing polities, politics, and policies, media governance serves as a construct which is helpful in analyzing media policy and regulation from a more inclusive perspective. Constitutional justifications for the maintenance of distance between politics and the media, combined with the fact that the goals of pluralism and diversity are difficult to enshrine effectively in law, are encouraging a shift from state to coregulation or self-regulation. Finding an appropriate balance among these forms of regulation is of paramount importance. Thus, in addition to serving as an analytical concept, media governance can also signpost a normative stance, embracing civic and professional groups within multistakeholder networks of deliberation on media regulation, and providing a basis for principled action and encouraging inclusive mechanisms such as public hearings. In this sense, media governance does not rule out state action, but instead offers a theoretically sound basis for the critical analysis of issues, such as the conditions for connecting citizens or protecting their communication rights, that extend beyond the commercial or market-led domain. The state may, for example, play a steering role by inviting the media industry to adopt self-regulatory codes or covenants on governance. This role may complement existing state roles, as for example, in the European Union, where at the transnational level the European Commission has welcomed powerful

media corporations and concerned itself increasingly with competition policy and issues of market dominance rather than issues of ownership pluralism.

The first two articles (Puppis; Raboy & Padovani) examine media governance conceptually drawing about theoretical traditions drawn from political science and traditions within the field of media and communication studies. The remaining three articles apply media governance as an analytical concept in the case of particular media institutions: the Federal Communication Commission in the United States, emphasizing the value of a historical perspective (Pickard); public service broadcasters developing a cross-national analysis (Moe); and editors-in-chief of Swedish newspapers (von Krogh & Nord).

In his article, Puppis offers a clarification of the media governance concept by contrasting two definitions. The first is a broad definition that seeks to capture all the collective and organizational rules that govern the organization of media systems. The second is a narrow definition that is restricted to the statutory rules that apply in the case of media policy and regulation. Arguing that the former approach not only has heuristic value but also theoretical adaptability, Puppis draws upon new sociological institutionalism to distinguish between the cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative facets of institutionalized forms of governance, thereby offering a rich framework for the analysis of the complex dynamics of the media industries.

The article by Raboy and Padovani lays out the main components of a conceptual framework developed as part of a global media policy (GMP) mapping project, reporting on the conceptual journey through which the GMP mapping project has evolved. Raboy and Padovani convincingly argue that there is a need for conceptual and empirical mapping that will enable scholars and policy practitioners to better understand the globalizing media policy environment. Literature from a range of disciplines is synthesized, providing the basis for a welcome plea for an approach that, to quote the authors, "avoids the traps of exclusive disciplinary legacies and opens spaces for inter- and cross-disciplinary dialogues."

Pickard offers a detailed historical analysis of policy battles in the United States in the immediate post-World War II period in which the government, social movement, and communication industry actors contested the proper relationship between the commercial media and democracy. The "postwar settlement" that emerged is shown to be consistent with light touch or self-regulatory measures that prevail today. Pickard's aim is to assess whether, with the failure of today's media models in the United States, there may be new opportunities to reassert the primacy of public access over corporate profits and diversity over commercial values.

Moe approaches media governance through the study of public service broadcasting. The article examines a specific direction of governance recently emerging from national policies but affected by international, European dynamics. Specifically, the article examines the complexities, claims, and realities of "public value tests" applied on UK, German, and Norwegian public service broadcasters. The author argues that differences as well as particularities and similarities of the application of

a common policy, in principle, have their roots in the historical context of each case, demonstrating path dependency that affects today's PSB's as well as their future.

Finally, staying at the media organizational level, focusing on journalism in Sweden, von Krogh and Nord argue that there seems to be a case for a control perspective in explaining the attitudes of Swedish editors-in-chief to the implementation and effectiveness of different media accountability systems (e.g., internal codes of journalistic conduct, external activities, and cooperative systems). Internal company/newsroom systems are naturally the ones that editors can control the most, and they are also held in highest esteem. Editors are also positive to readers' panels (where they can control the questions asked), to the Press Council/Press Ombudsman, and rather positive to readers' comments (which they can publish or not). Finally, external systems offer the least control for editors. Still, they favor some of them, like journalism training and media research, but are distinctly less interested in various kinds of external media criticism.

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